

Director of Creativity, Culture and Arts Programs at the Rockefeller Foundation in New York.

On behalf of the 31st Congressional District, I thank Dr. Paredes for your leadership, your service and most importantly for your commitment to improving the quality of life for students in the state of California.

IF MEDICARE CAN BUY A PROSTATE BIOPSY FOR \$178, WHY SPEND \$506?

## HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 6, 2001*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, Medicare pays different amounts for various medical procedures, depending on where the service is performed. In general (but not always), we pay more for a procedure in a hospital outpatient department, less for the same procedure in an ambulatory surgical center, and often even less when that procedure is performed in a doctor's personal office.

Some people—the very frail or those who are quite sick—often need to be cared for in a setting where intensive support services can be quickly provided. But for most, these various procedures can be performed safely in a variety of settings.

For those who do not need back-up support, it would seem that Medicare ought to pay no more than the lowest cost site of service. I've introduced legislation to ensure that type of savings—savings that would run into the hundreds of millions per year.

The following letter from a group of doctors describes why we should enact this change—ASAP.

FEBRUARY 14, 2001.

Representative PETE STARK,  
Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE STARK: We are a group of six urologists. We are writing this letter to voice our concerns about, and ask for your help in clarifying/rectifying HCFA reimbursement policy as it relates to site of service payments.

To briefly summarize, three routine and frequently performed urology procedures are reimbursed at very different rates when performed in a physician's office versus an ambulatory surgical center. The procedures, corresponding CPT codes and associated payments are:

CPT code and description	Office pmt.	ASC pmt.
52000 Cystourethroscopy .....	\$179	\$418
52281 Cystourethroscopy w/urethral calibration/dilation .....	232	569
55700 Prostate biopsy .....	178	506

As you can see, if the bill for these procedures is sent to Part A Medicare instead of Part B Medicare the reimbursement is tremendously higher. This is true even though they are exactly the same service provided with identical equipment.

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) has stated "All else being equal, Medicare should pay for ambulatory care based on the service, not the setting in which it is provided." AUA Health Policy Brief, Page 5, December 1998). The major cost drivers of providing these services are basically identical regardless of site of service (cost of cystoscopes, ultrasound imaging

equipment, power tables, sterilization equipment, light sources, irrigation fluid, ancillary personnel, and cost per square foot of space). We believe this present policy adversely and unfairly affects all providers who aren't owners of an ASC as well as Medicare beneficiaries.

Medicare beneficiaries are concerned about access and quality of care. Presently we provide these services at four locations. Without a level reimbursement policy concerning site of service, we will have to consider closing some offices and congregating all or most of these procedures at one centrally located ASC.

## INTRODUCTION OF NO GUNS FOR VIOLENT PERPETRATORS ACT

## HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 6, 2001*

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, today I join with twelve of my colleagues in introducing legislation that will help protect our communities by keeping guns out of the hands of our most violent criminals.

As an elected District Attorney for twelve years, I know that tough enforcement of our current laws is vital to keeping our communities safe. One of these federal laws in existence makes it illegal for convicted felons to possess a firearm. But would it surprise you to know that there is no similar prohibition on possession of a firearm by a person who has a juvenile adjudication of a violent crime? That is a fact. And it is a narrow loophole in the law that should be closed.

A constituent who owns a gun store in my district, Bob Lockett, brought this loophole to my attention. An individual with a conviction for a shooting death as a juvenile in California tried to purchase gun parts at his store. The State of Kansas has a law making it illegal for persons with a juvenile adjudication of a violent crime to possess a firearm. Therefore, when a search discovered the prior conviction, Mr. Lockett was able to prevent the purchase and notify the authorities. I commend Mr. Lockett for his actions and for bringing this matter to my attention.

Mr. Speaker, although I am grateful that Kansas has such a law, I believe that this should be a federal law to prevent violent perpetrators from possessing firearms nationwide. These individuals with a violent past should be prohibited from possessing firearms.

During my years as a District Attorney, I found that, to the victim of a violent crime, it makes little difference whether the perpetrator was an adult or a juvenile. I believe we all can agree that violent persons should not be able to legally possess a firearm.

Mr. Speaker, persons who have a juvenile adjudication for a violent felony should never possess a firearm. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

## THE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2001

## HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 6, 2001*

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the The Alternative Minimum Tax

Repeal Act of 2001 which will repeal the individual Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). The domestic tax system has dramatically changed since the creation of the AMT regime. Consequently, this tax regime has long outlived its purpose. Today, the AMT is punitive in nature, overly cumbersome and affects taxpayers who were never intended to fall into this tax trap. To immediately reduce the number of wage earners who are affected, my legislation will extend the current-law provision which allows personal tax credits to be applied against the AMT calculation. The proposal will also immediately increase the AMT income exemption level, originally added to the AMT structure in 1993, so that it is adjusted to reflect inflation since that time. Subsequently, it will increase the exemption amount annually by 10 percent. In addition, the bill will repeal the income limitation that currently applies to that exemption. Finally, at the end of a ten year period, the individual AMT will fully be repealed.

Included in the tax plan outline presented by President George W. Bush, was a statement in support of additional tax code changes that would provide relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax. Please join me by cosponsoring this important legislation. Eliminating the AMT will reduce the complexity of the tax code and remove another heavy burden shouldered by wage earners.

## INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO REDUCE THE CORPORATE TAX RATE TO 33 PERCENT

## HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 6, 2001*

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing three pieces of legislation to refine the tax proposal put forward by President Bush. Let me state at the outset that I fully support President Bush's tax proposal as he laid it out. I think it is appropriate for the times and well-designed. Even so, there is no legislation or proposal that cannot be improved upon. And so I offer these three bills in this spirit and in the belief that the President in all likelihood would and should support them.

The bill I am introducing takes as its starting point the income tax rate reductions proposed by President Bush, phased-in over ten years. I have included these rate reductions to provide the context for my proposed refinement, which is to reduce the top corporate income tax rate to 33 percent to be consistent with the top individual income tax rate in the Bush proposal of 33 percent.

The driving force of the Bush tax program is the importance of reducing tax rates. This is manifested in the reduction in the statutory tax rates, but also in such provisions as the doubling of the per child credit, the effect of which is to soften the high effective tax rates many lower-income taxpayers face due to the phase-out of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). When we reduce these "marginal" tax rates, we reduce the most important disincentives our tax system imposes on work effort, saving, and investment. Think of it! Just as an individual or a family starts to climb the economic ladder they face a marginal tax rate of almost 50 percent thanks to the combination of the federal individual income tax, the